

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

261018Z Oct 01

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	USNW-00	DINT-00	DODE-00
	DOPE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00
	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01
	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00	PRS-00
	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/007W		
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0124
INFO NSC WASHDC
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 003221

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR CHARLES GURNEY
PARIS FOR CHARLES NEARY
NAIROBI FOR TERRY PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/26/11
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE: NOT TOO LATE FOR FREE AND FAIR
ELECTION, ZVOBGO TELLS AMBASSADOR

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL OFFICER TODD FAULK FOR REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

11. (U) IN AN INTRODUCTORY MEETING, AMBASSADOR SULLIVAN MET WITH MASVINGO SOUTH MP AND LONG-STANDING ZANU-PF POLITICIAN EDDISON ZVOBGO ON OCTOBER 19. AMBASSADOR WAS JOINED BY POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF. AMBASSADOR AND ZVOBGO QUICKLY FOUND COMMON GROUND: BOTH HAD ATTENDED TUFTS UNIVERSITY IN THE U.S. AT THE SAME TIME DURING THE 1960S. THEIR DISCUSSION WAS WARM AND FRIENDLY.

PRESIDENTIAL POWERS SHOULD BE CURTAILED

12. (C) ZVOBGO BEGAN WITH A DISCUSSION OF PRESIDENT MUGABE'S POWERS. ZVOBGO SUPPORTS THE IDEA OF AN EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT, BUT BELIEVES THE PRESIDENT'S POWERS SHOULD BE CURTAILED. IN WRITING THE 1986 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT THAT TURNED MUGABE FROM A PRIME MINISTER INTO A PRESIDENT, ZVOBGO HAD PROPOSED MORE LIMITED EXECUTIVE POWERS FOR THE PRESIDENT, BUT THIS INITIAL DRAFT WAS REJECTED. IN RETROSPECT, ZVOBGO BELIEVES THAT MORE SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE TO MAKE MUGABE CONSTITUTIONALLY ANSWERABLE TO HIS CABINET. HOWEVER, MUGABE EXPANDED HIS "POLITICAL SPACE" TO SUCH AN EXTENT THAT HE DOES NOT ANSWER TO ANYONE BUT HIMSELF. THE AMBASSADOR STATED THAT AFRICA NEEDS TO MOVE AWAY FROM THE TRADITION OF THE STRONG MAN LEADER, EVEN IF THAT MEANS PUTTING MORE CONSTITUTIONAL RESTRICTIONS ON HIS POWER.

WE CAN'T BLAME THE WEST FOR OUR PROBLEMS

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13. (C) THERE ARE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT, SUCH AS FINANCE MINISTER SIMBA MAKONI, WHO HAVE A REALISTIC VIEW OF THE CAUSES AND EXTENT OF ZIMBABWE'S SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, ZVOBGO CONTINUED. UNFORTUNATELY, THERE ARE JUST AS MANY WITH UNREALISTIC VIEWS OR WHO FAIL TO EVEN ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PROBLEMS EXIST. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE BLAME THE U.S. OR BRITAIN FOR ZIMBABWE'S PROBLEMS. ZVOBGO SAID THIS IS PATENTLY ABSURD -- ZIMBABWE HAS ONLY ITSELF TO BLAME. HE WARNED THE AMBASSADOR THAT HE MAY ENCOUNTER A LEVEL OF XENOPHOBIA IN ZIMBABWE BECAUSE OF THE MORE POPULAR VIEW THAT OTHERS ARE RESPONSIBLE.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE FOR A FREE AND FAIR ELECTION

14. (C) ZVOBGO OPINED THAT IT IS NOT TOO LATE FOR A FREE AND FAIR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN ZIMBABWE. THE MP SUGGESTED THAT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD LAY DOWN CLEAR, MINIMUM CONDITIONS THAT MUST BE MET IF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND ELECTION OUTCOME ARE TO BE CONSIDERED LEGITIMATE; OTHERWISE, THE RESULTS WILL NOT

BE RECOGNIZED. AGREEMENT BY THE U.S., EU, AND SADC TO A MINIMUM SET OF STANDARDS COULD SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE CHANCES THAT THE ELECTION WILL BE AS FREE AND FAIR AS POSSIBLE. THE ELECTION WILL NOT BE PERFECT, ZVOBGO ADMITTED, BUT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD AIM FOR "SUBSTANTIAL COMPLIANCE" TO ITS CONDITIONS.

15. (C) THE AMBASSADOR ASKED IF THERE IS SPACE FOR
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OBSERVERS IN ZIMBABWE, AND ZVOBGO REPLIED "YES.
OBSERVERS WILL INSTILL CONFIDENCE IN THE POLITICAL
PROCESS." THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE RELUCTANT TO ALLOW
OBSERVERS -- THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THE EXPULSION OF THE
IFES OBSERVER TEAM IN SEPTEMBER -- BUT IF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY LAYS DOWN OBSERVERS AS A
CONDITION FOR AN LEGITIMATE ELECTION, THEN THERE IS A
BETTER CHANCE OF A FAIR ELECTION. IF THE GOVERNMENT
DOES NOT MEET THESE CONDITIONS, DONORS SHOULD MAKE CLEAR
THAT IT WILL NOT BE BUSINESS AS USUAL WITH ZIMBABWE.
THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ELECTION SINCE ZIMBABWE'S
INDEPENDENCE IN 1980, ZVOBGO OPINED, AND THE EFFORT
"SHOULD NOT END IN FUTILITY."

16. (C) WHEN ASKED ABOUT MUGABE'S INSISTENCE THAT HE
WOULD "NEVER, EVER ALLOW THE MDC TO TAKE POWER," ZVOBGO
REPLIED THAT HE INTERPRETS THIS STATEMENT TO MEAN THE
PRESIDENT CANNOT COMPREHEND LOSING THE ELECTION. ZVOBGO
BELIEVES THAT MUGABE WOULD LEAVE POWER IF SOUNDLY
DEFEATED IN THE ELECTION. ON THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY,
ZVOBGO THINKS THE ARMY WOULD NOT INTERFERE IN THE
ELECTION OUTCOME, AND WOULD ALLOW THE MDC TO ASSUME
POWER IF IT WON THE ELECTION BY A RESPECTABLE MARGIN.
ZVOBGO DOUBTED THAT A COUP BY MUGABE OR THE MILITARY

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	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/007W			

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WOULD BE SUSTAINABLE IF THE MDC WON BIG.
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SULLIVAN

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